Schemes should review their schemes in the light of Article 243G read with XI Schedule with a view to incorporating into the Schemes, the Constitutional provisions in this regard in letter and spirit. It has also been decided that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj should be consulted and their, views incorporated in the notes prepared for consideration of Cabinet/Cabinet Committees in all cases relating to Centrally Sponsored Programmes/ Schemes that have a bearing on decentralization/Ministries are expected to take necessary action in this regard.

Decline in foreign tourists

†*198. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the name of the States in the country where maximum number of foreign tourists visit;

(b) whether it is a fact that the number of foreign tourists has decreased during the last three years; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor alongwith the details of plans Government propose to implement to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The top popular States/Union Territories amongst the foreign tourists during the year 2003 are Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Kerala and Karnataka.

(b) After witnessing a decline of 6% in foreign tourist arrivals to India during the year 2002, there has been a positive growth of more than 14% during the year 2003 and an estimated growth of 24% during the year 2004 (January-November) as compared to the same period of the last year.

(c) The September 11 incident in the USA, conflict in Afghanistan, terrorist attack on Indian Parliament, tension on Indo-Pak border and the travel advisories issued by a number of foreign Governments were the main reasons for decline of foreign tourist arrivals to India during the year 2002.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Various steps taken by the Government to improve the flow of foreign tourists into the country include:—

- Direct approach to the consumers through Electronic and Print media through the Incredible India" Campaign.
- Creation of World Class Collaterals.
- Centralized Electronic Media Campaign.
- Direct co-operative marketing with tour operators and wholesalers overseas.
- Greater focus in the emerging markets particularly in the region of China, North East Asia and South East Asia.
- Participation in Trade Fairs & Exhibitions
- Optimizing Editorial PR and Publicity.
- Use of Internet and web marketing.
- Generating Tourist Publications.
- Re-inforcing hospitality programmes including grant of air passages to invite media personnel and tour operators on familiarization tours to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products.
- Launching of Road Shows in key source markets of Europe.
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure particularly budget hotels.
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions.

Promotion of tourism in Karnataka

*199. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that State Government of Karnataka propose to promote its tourism potential worldwide by making use of Mahamasthakabhisheka of the Gomatesware statue;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the State Government has submitted its proposal to the Central Government; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) Yes, Sir.